Role of Community Radio for Achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Rural Bangladesh

AHM. Bazlur Rahman
Role of Community Radio for Achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Rural Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, now 14 Community Radio Stations are on-air aiming to ensure empowerment and right to information for the rural community. They are broadcasting altogether 120 hours of programs per day on information, education, local entertainment, and development motivation activities. Around 536 Youth Women & Youth are now working with those Stations throughout the country as rural broadcasters.

BNNRC has been struggling for the last 12 years to open up the community media (including Community Radio, Community Television and Community film) and giving focus on its vital role as voices of the voiceless people. BNNRC has been addressing the community radio & community TV access issue for over a decade, almost since its emergence in the year 2000.

The reality of today is that the bondage between the community people and local-level community radio stations are getting strengthened day-by-day. Community Radio has now become their part of life. Community Radio becomes the instrument for the livelihood battle of the rural people.

BNNRC established the Community Media News Agency (CMNA), Community Media Academy (CMA) and Monthly Community Media to share development news & building capacity for the Community Media sector in Bangladesh.

Community Radio and Millennium Development Goals (MDG):

The following goals and targets have been determined in the millennium development goal declaration of United Nation’s general assembly in September 2000 and which have to be achieved by 2015. Amongst all, one of the targets of 8th goal is to make available Information and Communication Technology or the gifts and advantages of ICT for all. Despite Community Radio being a constituent of Information and Communication Technology, it, side by side of this target, can play a supportive role to attain the other goals of MDG.

Some preambles as regards the supportive role of Community Radio have been given precisely in the following table in the sphere of millennium development goals. Community radio workers should know where and how the matters are being gone as to achieve different targets of millennium development goals; in addition, they should know how much optimistic and potential the real picture of that.

Community Radio workers should evaluate MDG statistics and paper based reports in the light of the rate of human resource development and find out how much the success of achieving MDG has reached to the doorstep of marginal rural people. By means of this radio program and reports, rural community people, in one sense, will be conscious of their rights and in another
sense, the concerned departments of the government will be responsible for accountability in conveying the benefits of MDG which will take all forth to attain development goals.

Goal 01
Eradication of Acute Poverty and Hunger

- To ensure availability of information regarding market and employment and to assist poor farmers and primary/petty businessmen with the information for marketing their products.
- To air information in easily understandable language as to the development of life and livelihood of rural people.
- To increase dexterity/skill of rural farmers/stakeholders and ensure more access in open and competitive market.
- To increase participatory skill of rural people/manpower and arrange talks and discussions for ensuring appropriate use of comparative facilities.
- To air public and private social security service related matters which will be subject to availability.
- To air information regarding right of minimum wages and arrange talks and discussions with concerned departments.
- To give information and motivate the marginal community people for wage increase and alternative employment.
- To increase production for ensuring food security/food sovereignty and give useful information for balanced distribution and raising social awareness.

Goal 02: Achieving Primary Education Salutary to Everyone

Goal 03: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Goal 04: Diminishing Child Mortality Rate

Goal 05: Promoting Maternal Health Care

- To air information regarding the program of Achieving Primary Education for all and giving information locally concerning what should be done.
- To increase the number of trained teachers and their standard, skill etc. and enhance mutual cooperation among them by means of “Distance Course” on Community Radio.
- To ensure availability of messages and information of education ministry and its related institutions regarding the development of information and communication based skill to the rural community people.
- To arrange program with the help of appropriate technology regarding education and literacy and increase the participation of poor women and girl child under this program.
- To increase mass awareness regarding gender equality and sensitivity upon the women and change the existing thought/idea about women by means of community radio.
- Giving publicity to every information to stop child mortality.
- To increase skill of the health workers by offering essential information regarding lifelong education.
- To air information in easily understandable language regarding maternal and child disease and malnutrition.
- To air program about child and maternal health care.
• To increase the support for rural primary health workers supplied by the specialists and enhance access to modern technology to detect/ diagnose disease.

• Giving wide range of publicity and to arrange talks and discussion programs regarding primary health care information.

• To make available the message of different organizations’ services to rural community people at upa zilla and union level for the development of skill regarding primary health care.

• To broadcast the required and avoiding things for community people to resist HIV/ AIDS.

• To increase access to information for general people regarding resistance of HIV/ AIDS, maternity health and others by means of broadcasting programs in colloquial /regional language.

• To bring different information into sight of the people in an extensive range concerning malaria and other regional diseases by telecasting program in local/ regional language.

• Giving scientific information about physical and mental development of the adolescent boys and girls who are having their puberty and to motivate community people for practising sympathetic and friendly behavior with them.

Goal 07: Ensuring Sustainability of Environment Goal 08: Global Participation for Development

• To telecast program about things to be done by community people for sustainable development regarding agriculture, sanitation, water management and social afforestation projects.

• To give easy explanation of laws concerning saving environment and telecast programs about things to be done by community people in this context.

• Raising awareness with coordinated efforts on agriculture: congenial to environment e.g. bio fertilizer (compost), native seeds, control of plants’ distresses etc.

• Making a connection between community people and policy makers, farmers and advocacy groups.

• Making the people aware of climate change and its influence and in what state the climatic condition should exist, and offering information to be done.

• Chalking out different programs and arrange talks and discussion courses in local language for facing ‘natural calamity/ disaster’ and what should be done prior to disaster, posterior to disaster, at the time of disaster etc.

• Awaking the local community people with a view to ensuring their responsible participation for saving natural resources.

• To broadcast information regarding what should be done by the community people in taking the positive influences and avoiding the negatives of ‘global economy’.

• To telecast programs by means of using information and communication technology to lessen digital divide and knowledge divide and to offer knowledge at rural level.

• To telecast the importance of creating employment opportunity and side by side increase of tele-density by setting up tele-centers in an extensive scale.
• Creating awareness regarding what should be done by the community people in confronting the challenge of ‘global economy’.

• To collect information at rural level about medicinal plant and related community knowledge for making medicine with them and play a part to enhance ability/potential of rural people in taking care of health by using that information and to emphasize about how Information & Communication Technology can play a perfect role in this context.

• To telecast the importance of increasing literacy rate by means of E-learning system in order that the literacy rate of rural community people may be increased and also telecast program in an wide range how they can take an active part to develop the standard of living.

• To create enthusiasm in community people to the extensive use of Information & Communication Technology by means of broadcasting program by ‘community radio’.

• To create mass awareness about the given fund/assistance/donation of developed/donor countries as per commitment and also create awareness regarding the role of rural community people in proper materialization of that donation/assistance.